

## Activity 7

### Identifying and Removing Comma Splices

#### Practice 1

Below is a description of a football player nicknamed Darling making a long run for a touchdown from Irwin Shaw's "The Eighty-Yard Run." In each list, one of the commas is a comma splice that was not in the original. Remove each comma splice using one of the four ways to eliminate comma splices.

In doing this practice, you will see that comma splices create problems for readers, and must be eliminated.

- 1a. The pass was high and wide,  
b. and Darling jumped for it,  
c. feeling it slap flatly against his hands as he shook his hips to throw off the halfback who was diving at him,  
d. the center floated by,  
e. his hands desperately brushing Darling's knee as Darling picked his feet up high and delicately ran over a blocker and an opposing linesman in a jumble on the ground near the scrimmage line.
- 2a. He smiled a little to himself as he ran,  
b. holding the ball lightly in front of him,  
c. his knees pumping high,  
d. his hips twisting in the almost girlish run of a back in a broken field,  
e. the first halfback came at him,  
f. and Darling fed him his leg,  
g. then swung at the last moment,  
h. took the shock of the man's shoulder without breaking

- i. ran right through him,
  - j. his cleats biting securely into the turf.
- 3a. There was only the safety man now,
- b. coming warily at him,
  - c. his arms crooked,
  - d. hands spread,
  - e. he tucked the ball in,
  - f. spurted at him,
  - g. driving hard,
  - h. hurling himself along,
  - i. his legs pounding,
  - j. knees high,
  - k. all two hundred pounds bunched into controlled attack.
- 4a. Without thought,
- b. his arms and legs working beautifully together,
  - c. Darling headed right for the safety man,
  - d. stiff-armed him,
  - e. feeling blood spurt instantaneously from the man's nose onto his hand,
  - f. seeing his face go awry,
  - g. head turned,
  - h. mouth pulled to one side,
  - i. Darling pivoted away,
  - j. keeping the arm locked,
  - k. dropping the safety man as he ran easily toward the goal line,
  - l. with the drumming of cleats diminishing behind him.

## Practice 2

Five of the twenty-one commas below are comma splices that were not in the original paragraphs. Tell the numbers of the comma splices, copy the paragraphs, and then eliminate comma splices using whatever way seems effective. (To review the four ways to eliminate comma splices, see Activity 6.)

The May sunset was red in clouds (1), and there was still half an hour to twilight (2), the dry slope was dotted with rabbits (3), some nibbling at the thin grass near their holes (4), others pushing further down to look for dandelions or perhaps a cowslip that the rest had missed. Here and there one sat upright on an ant heap and looked about (5), with ears erect and nose in the wind (6), a blackbird (7), singing undisturbed on the outskirts of the wood (8), showed that there was nothing alarming there (9), and in the other direction (10), along the brook (11), all was plain to be seen (12), empty and quiet (13), the warren was at peace.

At the top of the bank (14), close to the wild cherry where the blackbird sang (15), was a little group of holes almost hidden by brambles (16), in the green half-light (17), at the mouth of one of these holes (18), two rabbits were sitting together side by side. At length (19), the larger of the two came out (20), slipped along the bank under cover of the brambles and so down into the ditch and up into the field (21), a few moments later the other followed.

*Richard Adams, Watership Down*